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MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES.

Baltimore, November, 1893.

PHONETICS AND "REFORM-METHOD."

II.

THE comparatively small number of French members, or such members as live in France, may appear strange to one who has not lived long enough in this country to know how conservative Frenchmen generally are in spite of political revolutions and frequent changes of government until lately. This conservatism has extended to all matters relative to higher education and instruction, especially the study of the classics. But it impresses me much less than the sad fact that our international association has hitherto won so few active friends (there are only ten American members among four hundred and fifty-eight in January, 1893) in the United States. This fact, which I merely state here without trying to explain it now,¹ surprises me so much the more, as the science of phonetics has been held in high esteem in progressive America from the beginning, which was not much later than in any country of Europe. Mr. Paul Passy himself says in the very first number of the "Phonetic Teacher" (May, 1886) that, in his first endeavors at teaching a language phonetically, he was inspired by "a series of experiments made chiefly in America." Be that as it may. Being a reformer by practice and inclination, and a member of the council of the "Phonetic

1. The reason of this sort of conservatism in France, to be looked for in the origin and historical development of its national civilisation, is very obvious, and need not be dwelt on here. Cf. for example, Raoul Frary, 'La Question du latin'; Jules Simon, 'La Réforme de l'enseignement secondaire'; Michel Bréal, 'Quelques mots sur l'Instruction publique en France.'

2. I shall probably be able to explain it later, and shall then be better prepared to do so in making an ample report of the state and progress of the study of modern languages, and the method of teaching them in the United States, in connection with several articles I intend to write for a German newspaper or review upon American colleges and universities, upon lectures, lessons, and examinations, upon the university movement, upon the representative men of the modern language movement, and similar questions concerning education and instruction in this country.

Teachers' Association," I esteem it a pleasant duty to invite all American neophilologists to join our society, and thus further the cause of reform for instruction in modern languages in school, college, and university. With this end in view I would call the attention of my colleagues to the following articles of our statutes:

Article premier.—Le but que poursuit l'Association est le développement des études de langues vivantes. . . Le principal moyen qu'elle emploie pour atteindre le but qu'elle se propose est le perfectionnement des méthodes d'enseignement des langues.

Article 4.—. . . La cotisation annuelle est de 5 francs pour les membres actifs et de 3 francs pour les adhérents. Elle est due au premier janvier. En versant dix cotisations on devient membre à vie.

Article 7.—L'Association est administrée par un Conseil de 20 membres élus par l'Assemblée générale. Les membres du Conseil doivent tous être membres actifs ou honoraires. Le Conseil se compose d'un président, de deux vice-présidents, d'un secrétaire, d'un trésorier, et de 15 administrateurs.

Whoever may wish to become a member of the "Phonetic Teachers' Association," and receive the monthly numbers of its publication issued regularly through the whole year, is asked to send either \$1.05 or 65 cents, the subscriptions respectively of active or adherent members, to the undersigned, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md. I will present the name, and forward the quota and address to the editor and treasurer, Mr. Paul Passy, and the subscriber will thus get, in a few weeks, the current and all the preceding numbers of the eighth volume of the *Maître Phonétique*.

2. 'Les Sons du français' is a standard work which, I do not doubt, is well known and appreciated also in this country, and of which I have already given a full account in a review of the first and second edition (1887 and 1889) for the *Zeitschrift für französische sprache und litteratur* x.² (1888), pp. 20-26, and for the *Maître Phonétique* v. (1890), February, pp. 22-25. The new edition (1892) contains a great many valuable additions and improvements in details, owing to the author's own observations and investigations, which he has continued and tried to complete in the meantime, and the result of which has been published (up to

the year 1890 and 1891) in a larger and more comprehensive treatise, his doctor's dissertation.³ The work, moreover, was bettered by the suggestions of the author's brother and friends, last but not least, by the results of the highly interesting experiments made by Abbé Rousselot during his lectures in the "Université Catholique" at Paris, which results were published by this eminent scholar in a book that marks an epoch in the history of French phonetics as well as dialectology: 'Les Modifications phonétiques du langage étudiées dans le patois d'une famille de Cellerfrouin (Charente),' Paris, Welter, 1891.⁴

The first edition of Paul Passy's 'Les Sons du français' was only a very short outline of the French phonetic system, destined for such members of the "Société de réforme orthographique" as, having no scientific knowledge of phonetics, were quite unaware of the great difficulties inherent in a radical change of common spelling. But the author soon perceived that his book might be still more useful in another direction, and that it was hailed with enthusiasm, and used with much profit by philologists and teachers principally abroad. He has, therefore, thought it advisable to change gradually its main objects, and to modify and enlarge its contents accordingly. He says in the preface of the third edition:

"D'une part, les jeunes philologues comprennent, de plus en plus, que l'étude des sons du langage est un préliminaire indispensable de la phonétique historique, à laquelle elle rend les mêmes services que la géographie à l'histoire. Et comme il est bon de travailler d'abord sur les matériaux qu'on a sous la main, ils s'occupent de plus en plus des sons du français vivant. D'autre part, les professeurs de langues vivantes commencent à comprendre les avantages énormes qu'eux et leurs élèves peuvent retirer de la connaissance de la phonétique et de l'emploi de la transcription. Eux aussi se mettent à étudier les

sons de notre langue. En particulier, un grand nombre de professeurs de français à l'étranger entreprennent cette étude, soit pour corriger leur prononciation si elle est défectueuse, soit pour être en état de corriger celle de leurs élèves. Les instituteurs qui enseignent la lecture, les maîtres des sourds-muets et des bègues, les professeurs de chant, les sténographes s'aperçoivent aussi de plus en plus des services que peut leur rendre la phonétique. Le public auquel je m'adresse maintenant n'est donc plus celui que j'avais en vue en 1887. . . ."

P. Passy still calls his book "un travail de vulgarisation, fait d'après une méthode scientifique." This is, I think, put too modestly, and by no means true any more. Scholars, linguists and phonetists, will undoubtedly find in it abundant sagacious and suggestive remarks and, almost everywhere, traces of independent and intelligent research which deserve their close attention and careful consideration. But, at the same time, it has all the advantages in common with a good specimen of such popular scientific books. It is exceedingly well written; indeed, it is much easier reading than his purely scientific work, 'Étude sur les Changements phonétiques,' and can be recommended to all beginners, particularly to those teachers of French who have "never cared for phonetics," but who are obliged to look rather late for *some* information about a subject they have despised so long without knowing it. I am sure such workers will get *much* information, and much pleasure besides, by reading Passy's book.

3. A very desirable and long-expected continuation of 'Les Sons du français' is the joint work of Paul Passy and his German friend, Franz Beyer, the best connoisseur of French phonetics in Germany, the distinguished author of 'Das Lautsystem des neufranzösischen' (Cöthen, 1887) and 'Französische phonetik' (Cöthen, 1888).

The 'Primer of Spoken French' ('Elementarbuch des gesprochenen französisch') contains: 1. forty-two texts, most of them well-chosen, prose and poetry, in phonetic spelling, pp. 1-74; 2. a grammar of spoken French, pp. 79-169, based upon those texts; 3. a glossary, pp. 173-218, composed of all the words and forms to be found in the reading-book. The same forty-two texts are printed in common

3. Cf. my note in the *Zeitschrift für franz. spr. u. litt.*, xiv. 2 (1892), pp. 56-66: Paul Passy, 'Étude sur les Changements phonétiques et leurs caractères généraux. Thèse pour le doctorat, présentée à la Faculté des lettres de Paris,' Firmin-Didot, 1890, Paris, and 'Corrections et additions . . . Supplément au *Maître Phonétique*,' July, 1891, pp. 93-100.

4. Cf. my account of the first part, 'Analyse physiologique des sons de mon patois—Leurs modifications inconscientes—Mesure du travail qu'en exige la production' in the *Phonetische Studien* v., heft 3 (1892), pp. 348-349.

spelling in the 'Ergänzungsheft,' where Beyer has furnished the student with a thorough and valuable commentary upon their phonetic transcription, that is, upon such general features and particular cases as seem to demand a discussion or explanation. The first book is a rather close imitation of Henry Sweet's well-known and highly esteemed 'Elementarbuch des gesprochenen englisch,' but certainly does not lose anything of its value by this fact, which, of course, has been frankly acknowledged by the authors.

Unquestionably the most important and most original part is the *grammar* of spoken French, comprising phonology, inflexion, and syntax. I consider it an excellent specimen of elementary grammar of a living cultivated speech (*kultursprache*), short and concise, and still, in regard to its purpose, sufficiently complete, since it treats nearly all the principal and most noteworthy linguistic facts in a scientific spirit, in a systematic and logical order. It is the only work of its kind existing in the whole field of Romance philology, unrivalled, or, at any rate, by far superior to other and earlier essays and endeavors in the same line, with similar tendencies. There is no doubt the authors have known, and profited by, the very remarkable books and treatises of their predecessors, if they really may be denominated such, *Koschwitz*, *Clédat*, *Jespersen*, and *Rolin*:

'Neuf Französische formenlehre nach ihrem lautbestande' by E. Koschwitz (Oppeln-Leipzig, Franck (Maske), 1888); 'Précis d'orthographe et de grammaire phonétiques pour l'enseignement du français à l'étranger' by L. Clédat (Paris, G. Masson, 1890); 'Det vigtigste af talesprogets grammatik,' pp. 138-145 in the 'Fransk læsebog efter lydskrift-metoden' by Otto Jespersen (København, Larsen, 1889; second edition with another title 'Fransk begynderbog,' 1892); 'Essai de grammaire phonétique' by Gustave Rolin, in *Phonetische Studien*, iv, heft 3, pp. 307-334 and v, heft 1, pp. 33-46 (1891).

However, a mere glance at these books, and a rapid comparison of their methods will suffice to convince the reader that both the German philologist and Mr. Clédat pursue quite different aims, and have been too strong-

ly influenced by literary prejudices and individual views that have nothing to do with, or are opposed to, an objective study of living speech as it really is, and not as it should be. On the other hand, he will perceive that the essay of the Danish scholar, however instructive and full of suggestions it may have been to Beyer and Passy, is but a short survey consisting of few pages, and treating only of the most frequent phenomena of declension and conjugation. Rolin's treatise comes, perhaps, nearest to the grammatical part of the 'Elementarbuch'; it certainly has some good parts, but is rather fragmentary and, in its different treatments, not worked with equal care and caution as far as the grammar proper (iv, pp. 327-334 and v, pp. 33-46) is concerned.

I, myself, have been preparing for several years a scientific grammar of spoken French. Two years ago, I spent a whole summer at Paris, in order to gather some new materials and correct and complete a series of observations made on previous occasions. But I, afterward, preferred to give up my plan of publishing such a work, when I heard that Passy and Beyer, two phonetists of high standing, indeed the very best specialists in their department in France and Germany, had joined forces, and were about to finish their 'Primer of spoken French.' I believe I was right in relinquishing my plan at that time, and if I should ever decide upon carrying it out in the future, I should have to examine and take into consideration every page, every line, every word of their admirable and praiseworthy book, which, in so many respects, has fully met, or even surpassed my expectations.

There is principally one point, and a very essential one, I think, in which the views of Passy and Beyer differ, or seem to differ, from my own. What do they understand by "spoken French"? The title of their 'Elementarbuch' is inexact and misleading; but a more correct and accurate one would perhaps have been, and was probably thought by the authors to be, too long. They apparently mean "Parisian colloquial (and popular) spoken French." I purposely add in parenthesis "and popular," but do not think that, in this case, "popular" is necessarily the same as "vulgar." There cannot be any mistake about the authors' real

opinion and intention, if one considers the general tenor, pronunciation, and style of the phonetic texts (prose and poetry) chosen by them for a base on which to construct their grammatical theories, and one notes also many significant passages in the preface, grammar, and commentary. Their intention, in this respect, is pretty distinctly marked even by the titles of the texts:

1. la klæ:s—2. le kat pwē kardino—3. ma fā:br—4. le flæ:r—5. lə patina:z—6. nwēl—7. la fwa:r—8. ðe bō garsō—9. egare dā la la fōrē—10. lez-abē:j—11. yn mepri:z—12. le lētr—13. lwi:z e sō lapē—14. lə kōk e lə rna:r—15. lə mā:zæ:r d-ōm—16. le faktæ:r ēle—17. istwa:r dō be:tā, kō:t bearnē—18. dy parē:j o mē:m—19. lə ljē:vrə dy gaskō—20. lə fārlatā—21. le kōrnē:j e le pi:zō—22. l-ā:fā prōdig—23. zē:zy e l-avāgl—24. ðe pa:ri, kō:t bearnē—25. le fā:tæ:r dā bur-nwa, kō:t frākōtwa—26.5 l-ā:fā gā:te—27. le zū:r—28. la smēn dy parēsø—29. la fā:sō de bato—30. dvinēt—31. lez-ā:fā e l-wazo—32. le rim—33. la ptit irō:del—34. α:n dā brātāN—35. la dōd d-ōvērN—36. l-ārb dā nwēl—37. fā:sō-d nwēl—38. l-irō:del—39. lə prizōnje-d nā:t—40. a fval syr ðēn-elefā—41. nōtr-α:n—42. l-ēkōl bōjōnē:r.

To illustrate and clear up entirely the authors' stand-point in respect to the question of the standard of spoken French, I need quote only the following passages:

"Der an sein buchfranzösisch gewöhnte leser wird daher manches vermissen, wie das vielberufene imperfekt des konjunktivs, das historische perfekt u. a. m.; andererseits dürfte er aber auch einer ganzen reihe grammatischer, besonders lautlicher, . . . erscheinungen gegenüberstehen, die ihm teilweise oder ganz neu sind, und die ihn veranlassen werden, sich über das wahre verhältnis wirklich gesprochener und 'rechtschriftlich' niedergeschriebener rede einmal volle klarheit zu verschaffen" (Preface, pp. vi-vii).

"Eine weitere form der vergangenheit ist das sogenannte historische perfekt (par:se défini): zā fy . . . , z-y . . . , z-ale . . . , zā dōne . . . , zā vē . . . Dasselbe ist aber in der umgangssprache der Nordfranzosen ausgestorben, gehört also nicht hierher. Es wird häufig in der schriftsprache gebraucht, ebenso in feierlicher rede oder erzählung; im alltäglichen leben nur von Südfrauzosen" (Grammar §152, p. 155-156).

5 Nos. 26-41 are poems. The style they represent, is that of popular, burlesque, and juvenile poetry and, therefore, but for rhyme and rhythm, not unlike, or not at variance with, the language exhibited in the twenty-six prose pieces.

"Oder in scherzhafter nachahmung der süd-französischen redeweise, wie im reim:
kōmæ nu nuz-amyzama
fe madamā kuk/fina;
nu n-etjō ni ōmā ni famā,
nuz-etjō tu:s s-ōvērNa" (Foot-note, p. 156).

The existence of the *imparfait du subjonctif* is not even mentioned, or hinted at, in the grammar (cf. *möglichkeitsform*, for example, in §120, p. 139); and, I feel sure, there is not a single form of the *imparfait du subjonctif* or of the *passé défini* to be found in any one of the forty-two texts of the reading-book.

It is evident that what Beyer and Passy understand by "spoken French," is "Parisian and Northern colloquial (and popular) French," and differs a great deal from "spoken French," in the wider conception of the word, that is, the language more or less uniformly spoken by all educated Frenchmen, a sort of "High French" or "artificial standard French," which may be compared to the "High German" of Northern and Central Germany and the "artificial standard English" of the educated classes in the North of England, Scotland, Ireland, America, etc. This French, in a *fixed form*,⁶ exists nowhere in reality, but is certainly practised outside of Paris, at least in the imagination of those who aspire to use it; it also differs somewhat from "Parisian and Northern spoken French," if we use this term in a general sense, without restricting it by the epithets "conversational," "colloquial," and "popular," and if we take for model of this kind of French the phonetic texts (prose and poetry) which we find in the second edition of Paul Passy's 'Le Français parlé.'⁷ Here, indeed, we meet with nearly

6 Are, therefore, French, English, and German spoken according to the artificial standard a nonentity? Yes and no. Also Parisian French, London English, Hanover German, or whatever Sweet and his followers may regard as normal German, rests upon an abstraction, and cannot be supposed to exist, in a *fixed form*, anywhere, with any portion of the inhabitants of Paris, London, and Hanover.

7 Heilbronn, Henninger, second edition, 1889. The third edition (Leipzig, Reisland, 1892) is said, and seems to me, to be but a reprint of the second. The first (1886) may be said to have fairly represented the "artificial standard French," the spoken language common to all cultivated Frenchmen without regard to any particular town or province, but, nevertheless, based, in the same degree as the written (literary) language, on the popular dialect of Paris. Everybody knows there is much less difference between "artificial standard

all the various types of "Parisian and Northern spoken French," not only with the colloquial (and popular), but also the narrative, oratorical, poetical (that is, used in art-poetry) and other types.

In conformity with their theories derived from the forty-two texts, the authors of the 'Elementarbuch' look upon the *imparfait du subjonctif* and the *passé défini* as extinct or obsolete. This is true, if they mean the colloquial (and popular) language of Paris and Northern France. But a foreigner would fall into a great error, if he should extend their statement to "spoken French" in general, or even to "Parisian and Northern spoken French" without restriction. The *imparfait du subjonctif* and the *passé défini* may be considered to be *obsolete* in the speech of educated people in Paris, because they do not use these forms in ordinary conversation, in every day speech; but they cannot be said to be *extinct*. They are *still* alive in the language, the third person sing. and plur. more so than the first and second person, or rather they are *kept alive*, "artificially" kept alive by the influence of writing and literature. They are kept alive, I say, by this influence, which is continually going on and never ceases in a cultivated speech (*kultursprache*), just as many other forms and words that are not yet quite extinct, but only obsolete, rare, and about to drop out of use. Accordingly, while the *passé défini* and the *imparfait du subjonctif* are not at all to be found in the forty-two texts of the 'Elementarbuch,' which would seem to have been carefully selected with the end in view to exclude such forms, examples of the first form are frequent, and even those of the second are, at least, not wanting in some texts of 'Le Français parlé.'

Cf. *gə fərme=je fermai*, *gə oze=j'osai*, *sə fy=ce fut*, p. 31, *i sɔrti=il sortit*, p. 35 ("Le Français en Amérique"); *sɔvi:r=suivirent*, *fi:r=firent*, *il j y t yn...=il y eut une...*, p. 49 ("La culture classique"); *resta=resta*, *oza=osa*, *prɔdɔiz=r=produisirent*, p. 87 ("Les parlers français"); *yst ete=eussent été*, p. 93 ("Discours de Frédéric Passy"); *i sufrɛ ra:rmə*

French" outside of Paris and "Parisian French," than between "artificial standard English" and "London English," and between "High German" and "Hanover German," or even the German generally spoken in the good society of Berlin.

k ʃ lɔi parla (=parlât), *e ʒamɛ k ʃn o:za (=osât)* *l kʃtradi:r*, p. 39 ("L'orgueil guéri"), etc.

I do not believe that all the forms of the *passé défini* and the *imparfait du subjonctif* will soon disappear entirely from cultivated French speech; they are too useful and almost necessary for expressing certain ideas, and the present influence of literature and writing is too strong in France to permit such syntactical reduction. However, there is no doubt that even the literary language is beginning to become unsettled and to hesitate in the use of the *passé défini* (cf., for example, Alphonse Daudet's style) and, especially, the *imparfait du subjonctif*. There are many cases where writers seem to dislike them, and apparently try to avoid their use. These are unmistakable signs of their gradual disappearance and extreme rarity in spoken French, and we may thus predict their complete extinction at some remote date even in the refined speech of the educated classes, not only in Paris but in the whole country. Yet, it is not impossible, before this ultimate result is reached, there may be a reaction, an artificial revival of these obsolete forms, in the style of modern writers.

Strictly speaking, only such phonetic texts are really fit and useful for the purpose of scientific researches as give us a faithful phonographic picture of the individual pronunciation of several persons belonging to the same community, the same society, the same sphere of life, in a definite place, at a definite time—texts which show us the spoken language as "irregular," as "incorrect," as "ungrammatical," as natural, as genuine, as home-grown, as provincial, as individual as possible. The less "normalized," the less "artificial," and the more numerous such linguistic documents are, the better they will serve their purpose, and the more welcome and valuable they will be to the scholar.

However, all the phonetic texts modeled on the ordinary way of speaking, hearing and writing (not by the aid of phonographic instruments), and particularly those texts that are composed or arranged for the purpose of teaching and learning and as the basis of grammar, theoretic discussions and specu-

lations, suffer the same disadvantage, and cannot but have, in a higher or lesser degree, the same defect. They are all more or less colored by the theorist, and necessarily adapted by him to some "artificial" standard, however distasteful and obnoxious this term may appear to him. Everyone who transcribes by phonetic characters, in the usual way, his own pronunciation or that of a man speaking the same maternal language, unconsciously normalizes it; and he does so even consciously, if he intends to make general remarks, and formulate rules and laws about it. Of course, there is less risk, less opportunity of normalizing, whenever the phonetist and linguist endeavors to fix in this manner the sounds, and combinations of sounds, of the language of a savage tribe, or of a popular dialect quite distinct from the speech of the educated classes. But the danger is much greater, and a phonetist is much more tempted to normalize unconsciously and consciously, whenever he undertakes to set down in phonetic script the current pronunciation of a cultivated speech (*kultursprache*), itself an "artificial" outgrowth of a "natural" dialect, influenced by various other dialects and, often, also by foreign languages. Be he a native, or a foreigner knowing or thinking to know perfectly the language he is investigating, he has his preconceptions, his own "artificial" standard; and if he had not, it would be wonderful indeed and quite exceptional.

There are two classes of phonetists, in this case, to be distinguished: some are inclined to normalize toward the literary language (these are more or less adherents of the so-called artificial standard), others have a liking for, and tend toward the colloquial and popular speech. The latter belong to Henry Sweet's school and are adherents of his London and Southern English standard, and of Paul Passy's Parisian and Northern French standard (second and third edition of 'Le Français parlé,' and 'Elementarbuch'). I have no objection to, and am quite pleased with, the last named tendency,⁸ provided there is no

self-deception on the author's part in composing and arranging such phonetic texts, and neither error nor ignorance and incapacity on the teacher's and learner's side in understanding and reading them.

For my part, I should always prefer for the use of schools outside of France a mixed system: a book containing, as a foundation and starting-point of instruction, a few phonetic texts arranged according to the purely artificial standard, but, at the same time, representing all the various types of speech and, therefore, including also a sufficient number of specimens illustrative of the variation and carelessness of rapid, more natural, popular, and thoroughly colloquial pronunciation. Teachers who use exclusively such texts as those of Sweet and Passy-Beyer and know English and French more by theory than by practice, are very subject to misunderstand, interpret wrongly, and exaggerate in their own pronunciation many peculiarities and phenomena that are quite "correct" in the fluent, rapid speech of a native. But these peculiarities become absurd and false, when slowly and pedantically imitated by a foreigner and theorist who does not know (practically) the language well enough. As for German, there cannot be the least doubt and hesitation in this matter: the artificial standard is the only rational one to be used at school; a Dresden, a Hanover, even a Berlin standard would be ridiculous and monstrous in the school room.

Assimilation is one of those phenomena in

"S. me reproche, comme à Sweet, d'avoir une préférence pour les formes vulgaires ou négligées. Formulé dans ces termes généraux, le reproche est difficile à discuter. S. le précise bien par quelques exemples; mais ce sont des mots enlevés à leur contexte, qui ne disent pas grand'chose. Ainsi *msjθ*, tout court, est du langage des écoliers; mais *s ε msjθ perijθ* me paraît tout à fait normal. [But cf. *divinēt* instead of *divinēt=devinette*, title of a short poem, 'Elementarbuch,' No. 30, pp. xi and 55]. D'ailleurs plusieurs des formes incriminées sont plutôt des archaïsmes que des vulgarismes; tels sont *gramē: r, silab*, où S. voudrait la consonne double. En tout cas je dois protester contre la généralisation de certaines formes. J'ai écrit *u mab dō l ē: stity, kat frā, vot fi: j*, et S. semble conclure que je recommande aussi *tab rθ: d, nōb kō: r*; il s'étonne de me voir écrire *sa pōpōrā lā: g*. C'est qu'en cette matière, nous n'avons pas du tout affaire à des "lois phonétiques constantes." Le français commun est un mélange de dialectes, et on ne peut pas toujours donner des règles générales. Dans mes transcriptions, j'essaye d'employer toujours la prononciation qui me paraît la meilleure, en tenant compte du style, du contexte, etc.; je ne prétends pas réussir toujours. Aux étrangers, je recommande, avec S., de choisir en cas de doute les formes les plus soignées."

⁸ Mr. Paul Passy defends his own position, with reference to this question, in his review of J. Storm's 'Englische philologie,' second edition, *Maître Phonétique*, April, 1893, p. 63:

French which I have just mentioned, and which, as I said, a foreigner, if he does not know the language sufficiently, is most likely to "misunderstand, interpret wrongly and exaggerate" in his own slow and painful pronunciation. I mean the assimilation of consonants from word to word, from syllable to syllable; for example,

fse=gse=gase=je sais, *saf pa=sav pa=savent pas*, *tsy=dsy=dasy=dessus*, *tpi=dpyi=dpyi=depuis*, *yn grāt parti=yn grād (grā:d) parti=une grande partie*, *la plaz vādo:m=la plas vādo:m=la place Vendôme*, *la dōd dōverN=la dot dōverN (overN)=la dot d'Auvergne*, etc.

In this respect, Passy and Beyer have committed a serious mistake, which they probably regret now, and will certainly do away with in a second edition of their work: they have normalized the language of their texts according to the colloquial type of speech and thus made it "artificial" and faulty. The native, to whom, chiefly, we owe the phonetic transcription, has been, as it very often happens, involuntarily less radical, less consistent than the foreigner, who, carried away by the charm and simplicity of his theory, has formulated in his commentary several rules pertaining to this question (which rules are based upon these "normalized" texts) and carefully noted and corrected the few examples in which his friend has omitted or forgotten to mark the assimilation of the preceding consonant. I pity the German students who are to observe such strict rules and who, perhaps, do not distinguish voiced and voiceless consonants in their own native dialect. I am afraid the result will be a disastrous one in many cases, since it is exceedingly difficult for them to overcome their natural inclination to pronounce *f* instead of *g* in *gə se=je sais*, *t* instead of *d* in *grā:d=grande*, etc.

At all events, we now know that the assimilation of consonants from word to word and from syllable to syllable, although extremely frequent in spoken French, is, in reality, not constant, never or seldom compulsory and regular, and, very often, partial; for example, *savent pas=sav pa*, *saf pa*; the labial fricative is generally neither *v* nor *f*, but a voiceless *v* (that is, voiceless like *f*, closure of lips being the same as in pronouncing *v*). The last fact

has been ascertained and scientifically proved by the ingenious and wonderful experiments of Abbé Rousselot in the "Université Catholique" (see No. 2, p. 194). His proof is conclusive, and so clear and exact as to render any dispute and further discussion futile. The whole question of inconstant and partial assimilation, as far as *Parisian French* is concerned, has been, moreover, very judiciously treated by Paul Passy in the third edition of his 'Les Sons du français,' §223, p. 115, and by his brother, Jean Passy, in the *Maître Phonétique*, February 1893, pp. 28-29.

In many points, not alone in those mentioned above, I am not of the opinion held by the authors of the 'Primer of Spoken French,' and if I should go through all the paragraphs and chapters, my review would become a book by itself. Nevertheless, I think the 'Elementarbuch' a first-rate book, a standard work that ought to be carefully read and thoroughly studied by every Romance philologist, teacher and student of French, and used as a text-book in the class-room of every college as well as in the Romance seminary of every university. I hope Mr. Paul Passy will make good his promise (*Maître Phonétique*, February, 1893, p. 34), and give us very soon an English edition of this work, adapted to the needs of American and English students.

A. RAMBEAU.

Johns Hopkins University.

FRAGMENTS OF AN ÆLFRIC MANUSCRIPT.

A few days ago Mr. F. Madan, sub-librarian of the Bodleian and Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, called my attention to a small fragment of parchment now forming part of the binding of one of the volumes in his college library, and containing some words in Old English. The book in question, which bears the press mark T. 11. 27, is a copy of Erasmus' *Lingua* (1530), and the binding, which in Mr. Madan's opinion is evidently English (very possibly Oxford) work, dates from the early part of the seventeenth century.

On examining the piece of parchment I found that it contained the following two short fragments of Ælfric's *Sermo de initio creature*